

Submission No. 930

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Secretary:

Forbes, Bev (REPS)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, 8 August 2003 11:52 AM

To: Committee, FCA (REPS)

Subject: Child Support issues

To whom it may concern,

As I have had no problems regarding custody arrangements as my ex husband isn't all that concerned as to whether he sees his son or not and only phones him occasionally and at the moment I don't even know where he lives.

I do have concerns though where the contact with an ex partner is and can be detrimental to a child. As in the case of my eldest child [now 19 years old] whose father has displayed over the years an obsessive [and I am being kind in this description] and sometimes violent attitude when she was in his care/contact visit. I have on more than one occasion had to pack and disappear in the middle of the night to try and give my children some sort of a stable lifestyle where we could be away from a person who stalked, caused fear within the neighbourhood from his actions and tried to influence my daughter that only intimidation and violence is the only way to settle a dispute. Trying to get help from the authorities was of no avail , the local police force tell you to write it down in your diary, they allowed him to drive around in an unregistered car and when I tried to get a DVO on him he told the system that I was a heroin addict, that I fed my daughter Herion, that I broke her bones and did all sorts of harm to her, Naturally the authorities looked into this and found that it was a pack of lies but the damage had already been done, my daughter was humiliated at school by these actions [she was taken out of her classroom for a interview by family services and police] and even though these accusations were found to be untrue we were never treated with the same respect and she also found out at an early age that doing the right thing [going through the legal system] doesn't work.

In other instances concerning my friends' children, when they have been on contact visits their father has set up a dart board with their mothers photo attached and told to throw darts at it. These fathers have no respect for their childrens feelings in that in forcing their children to do these deeds they are also constantly denigrating their mothers in front of them, taking drugs in front of them, drinking in front of them and in most cases ignoring them while they continue living the lifestyle their mother chose to leave them for.

In cases where there is violence, drugs and alcohol being the main factor for parents to separate, the parent who takes these children out of this lifestyle should be applauded instead of being dragged through a court system that not only causes disruption to the child, it also results in the child a confusion that has long term effects that are only now being looked at.

In the case of grandparents, I never let what their child did to me try to affect my dealings with them. I always kept up contact with them so that my children could have contact with them if the grandparents so wished, after all my problem was with their child not them. That is not so in all cases and I was lucky that my childrens grandparents were responsible adults and I had no worries about their safety when they had holidays with them.

My one gripe is that these fathers/mothers do not like to pay child support, they want all the advantages but not the responsibility that comes with it. After nine and a half years I finally got some child support [with me having to supply the child support agency with all the details to legally get it] and then Centalink took half of it. The only loser there is the child, for when their mother has finally been able to pay off all the bills incurred over that period of time and maybe have a few dollars left over to buy a cheap car so that they can now go and do things that they couldn't do before they are hit with a three thousand dollar debt with Centalink and so are put back behind the eight ball again. Even though that in that nine and a half year period the Child Support Agency has conceded neglect in its responsibility to collect child support arrears.

What I would like to see happen is that these fathers/mothers that continually refuse to pay child support be convicted and do time or community service for their neglect instead of the child having to lose out yet again. I do not like having to tell my child he can't play weekend sport, have clothes or new shoes, go to birthday parties or on any other outings because we can't afford it. Yes I chose to be a single parent mainly because circumstances beyond my control dictated it. My childrens safety was of a more paramount concern than whether I had a job to pay the bills. Please also note that I have had to use a neighbours computer to send this message as I cannot afford to buy one [another disadvantage that my son has to incur and this affects his schooling].

Yours sincerely,
Michele Thomas.

18/08/2003